



Small Business In Focus

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Small Business GWAC Center

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Director's Corner



Mary Parks, Director, Small Business GWAC Center

This newsletter typically focuses on the Small Business GWAC Center, what we're doing and specific contractual issues that we think may assist both our Industry and Government partners. This issue I'm changing tactics a bit to introduce my two peers in the GSA, Federal Acquisition Service (FAS), Integrated Technology Service (ITS) Governmentwide Acquisition Contract (GWAC) Program, Patricia Renfro, Enterprise GWAC Center Southwest, Ft. Worth, TX. and Casey Kelley, Enterprise GWAC Center West, San Diego, CA, as well as our Program Manager, Jim Ghiloni, Fairfax, VA.

During an extended hiring freeze at GSA, the Enterprise GWAC Centers were managed by individuals acting in the role of Director, as those positions had recently become vacant. Paul Martin, San Diego and Patricia Renfro, Ft. Worth ably filled those acting roles during that two year time period. I guess all things come to an end, whether and now the GWAC Program has what I would call a New Beginning. As our organization works towards an integrated approach to our contract offerings and a more standardized approach to training, delegations of authority, task order reviews, etc. I thought our small business in focus readers should get a glimpse of the Program as a whole.

Jim Ghiloni, our GWAC Program Manager in ITS, may be familiar to many of you, as Jim was put in charge of the Alliant Program and has worked diligently on designing the contracts, both large and small, to meet the new and emerging needs of the federal IT community. Jim came to the ITS portfolio from FEDSIM, where he was a Lead Project Manager. Jim is a Pennsylvania native and a Steelers fan!!

Patricia Renfro, the Enterprise Southwest GWAC Director has been the Senior Contract Specialist in charge of that Center for many years. She joined the Center from the Assisted Services organization in the Southwest Region and prior to that was a contracting officer in the Public Building Service. Patricia's organization manages the Millennia Lite GWAC and is diligently managing the



Patricia Renfro, Director, Enterprise GWAC Southwest Center

evaluation of the Alliant GWAC. Besides being a good friend, Patricia is a wife and mother of an 18 year old daughter.



Casey Kelley, Director, Enterprise GWAC West Center

Casey Kelley, the Enterprise West GWAC Director, came to us from the Assisted Acquisition Services in GSA in Southern California, where he was the Branch Manager. Prior to joining GSA, Casey worked in private industry in telecommunications. Casey's Center manages the Millennia and Answer GWACs. I'm looking forward to getting to know and working with Casey. Casey is married and has two children, a boy and a girl. If you want to start a conversation with Casey, ask him about his son's little league baseball team.

As an old-timer around here, I'm thrilled to have the GWAC Program fully functional and want to welcome both Patricia and Casey to their new Directors role. It's great to have two awesome co-workers in the fold.

GWAC Customer Training

Census and NOAA Briefed on COMMITTS NG

Matthew Verhulst, Contracting Director, and Todd Tekesky, Contracting Officer, traveled to Washington, DC, July 21-22, and met with Commerce Bureaus, Census and NOAA (National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration). As current customers of the COMMITTS NexGen GWAC, they discussed specific issues that the Dept of Commerce had regarding COMMITTS NG.

Training Conducted at Dept of Interior Acquisition Services Directorate

Lori Hanavan, Business Development Specialist, and Misty Claypole, Contracting Officer, conducted a training session with the Acquisition Services Directorate (formerly GovWorks) of the Department of Interior on Tuesday, May 20, 2008. The training included an overview of the Small Business GWAC Center contracts as well as delegation of ordering authority for 8(a) STARS and VETS contracts. More than 50 people attended the training at the Herndon, Virginia, location. Associates in the Washington, DC, and Denver, Colorado, offices participated via teleconference. Delegation was granted to 19 Contracting Officers.

DISA Trained on Small Business GWACs

On May 14, Matthew Verhulst, Contracts Division Director, and Jean Oyler presented "Developing Contracting Strategies with Small Business GWACs" to approximately 75 local and remote DISA contracting and program personnel as part of DISA's monthly Acquisition Excellence Workshop broadcasted from their Falls Church, VA office. The session featured an overview of GSA's small business GWAC portfolio as well as a detailed demonstration of best practices, tools and tips that ordering activities may incorporate into their market research and due diligence activities when considering a GWAC in their strategy decisions. This training opportunity came about through the efforts of and relationship with Tonya Butler, Customer Service Director from Customer Accounts and Research, GSA Mid-Atlantic Region.

On July 22, Matthew Verhulst, Contracts Division Director, and Todd Tekesky, COMMITTS NexGen

Procuring Contracting Officer, met with DISA to brief their program staff on the technical aspects of the COMMITTS contract. This session was a result of the May 14th briefing and requested by the Information Assurance & NetOps program manager.

USDA Visit and Training on Small Business GWACs

On May 13, Jean Oyler, Business Operations Director, presented "Developing IT Strategies with Small Business GWACs" to approximately 30 local and remote contracting and program personnel in the USDA Procurement Operations Division, Washington, DC. The session featured an overview of GSA's small business GWAC portfolio as well as a detailed demonstration of best practices, tools and tips that ordering activities may incorporate into their market research when considering a GWAC in their strategy decisions.

VETS Program Meeting held at the 4th Annual National Veterans Conference



VETS GWAC Industry Partners and guests at the VETS Program Meeting, July 7, 2008

The Small Business GWAC Center hosted a VETS semi-annual Program Meeting on July 7 in conjunction with the 4th Annual Veteran Small Business Conference and Expo, Las Vegas, NV. John Phelps, GSA Chief of Staff, spoke on the

GSA's 21 Gun Salute initiative as an invited speaker. Adele Vine, Deputy Regional Counsel, GSA Heartland, spoke about novation and change of name agreements with more than 60 VETS prime contract holders. Other topics included subcontracting, capabilities research on VETS, program outreach efforts and upcoming events. In addition, GWAC associates participated in the National Veterans Conference, July 7-10 by staffing a GSA exhibit booth. And the Center's Director, Mary Parks, participated as a panelist in the Information Technology I session held during the Conference.



John Phelps, GSA Chief of Staff, spoke on the GSA 21 Gun Salute initiative at the VETS Program Meeting, July 7, 2008

FAA National Small Business Conference

On June 16, 2008, Janna Babcock, VETS Procuring Contracting Officer, presented an overview of the VETS GWAC to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Annual National Small Business Procurement Opportunities Training Conference and Trade Show. The theme of this year's conference was "Partnering to Achieve FAA Flight Plan Goals." Approximately 60 people representing small businesses and FAA contracting personnel attended the training held in Las Vegas, Nevada.

Center Participates in GSA Expo

The GSA EXPO held in Anaheim, CA on April 22 - 24, 2008 hosted a number of the Small Business

GWAC Center contract holders as exhibitors. During the Expo, Jihyun Huyck and Dean Cole, Business Development Specialists, presented training on the Small Business GWAC portfolio in two separate sessions. The course provided an overview of the GSA Small Business GWAC portfolio, covering definition, authority, scope and ordering procedures. The course also presented real task order examples to illustrate successful IT solutions acquired under the small business GWACs. Both sessions had a total of 68 attendees and received an overall satisfaction rating of 4.52 out of 5.0.

2008 Federal Information Security Conference

Dean Cole, Business Development Specialist, attended the 2008 Federal Information Security Conference (FISC) July 1-2 in Colorado Springs, CO. Dean was accompanied by Tom Corcoran, Business Development Specialist for the IT 70 Schedule Program in Central Office, and Arleen Kinder, Customer Service Director for the Customer Accounts and Research Division in Region 8, as GSA exhibitors for the event. Approximately 250 Information Assurance Managers, Computer Security Personnel, Network Managers, Chief Information Security Officers, etc. were in attendance. Due to the location, the attendees included many Air Force personnel including Major General Lord, Commander of the Air Force Cyberspace Command (provisional) as keynote speaker. At least one request for GWAC and IT Schedules training has been confirmed as a result of a visit to the GSA booth.

COMMITTS NexGen

COMMITTS Industry Day

The Center hosted an industry day for our new COMMITTS NexGen Industry Partners on May 14, 2008 at the GSA Auditorium in Washington DC. Remarks were given by John Johnson, Assistant Commissioner of ITS, Mary Powers-King, Director, GWAC and Schedule 70 Programs and Jim Ghiloni, Director, GWAC Programs. Mary Parks, the Center Director, introduced the center and Matthew Verhulst, Contracts Division Director, addressed contractual questions. The meeting was attended by over 50 industry representatives, who were

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most interested in GSA's efforts at revitalizing this GWAC.

COMMITTS NexGen is a governmentwide acquisition contract (GWAC) vehicle that is set aside for small businesses. This GWAC was transferred to GSA in late March from the Department of Commerce.

COMMITTS NexGen GWAC Training Webinars

The Center hosted four delegation of procurement authority (DPA) training sessions during June and July for the COMMITTS NexGen contract. The webinars were held to educate federal customers on the COMMITTS NexGen contract basics, the associated features and benefits, and proper use of the contract. Training attendees are eligible to obtain authority to utilize the COMMITTS NexGen contract, as required by the Office of Management and Budget.

KUDOS

VETS GWAC Customers Receive Awards

Jean Oyler, Business Operations Director for the Center, attended the 2nd Annual Veteran-Owned Business Accountability Summit on June 12 in Washington, DC. Co-hosted by the VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise and the National Veteran-Owned Business Association, the event focused on federal agency progress toward reaching procurement goals as well as challenges facing industry in securing federal business. This event included the Champions of Veterans Enterprise awards program at which two VETS GWAC customers were recognized. DoD's Washington Headquarters Services and USDA's Forest Service were presented with Federal Achievement awards for exceeding their organizational goals and use of the VETS GWAC in support of service-disabled veterans. Together, these customers awarded task orders exceeding \$140 million over five years with VETS GWAC prime contractors. The event resulted in opportunities for the Center to train the Department of Transportation and DCMA on the small business GWACs early in FY09.



From left to right: Ronald Hooper, Director, Acquisition Management, Forest Service, Arlington, VA, Jean Oyler, Business Operations Director, GSA Small Business GWAC Center, and Hank Kashdan, Deputy Chief for Business Operations, Forest Service, Arlington, VA, at the Champions of Veterans Enterprise Awards program, June 12, Washington, DC.

Mary Parks Receives AFFIRM Award

Mary Parks, Center Director, received the AFFIRM Leadership Award in Acquisition and Procurement, presented for excellence in government information services for acquisition and procurement improvement and effectiveness, specifically in government-wide initiatives or service. Mary is a co-award winner with Scott Denniston, Director, Office of Small Business Utilization from the Department of Veterans Affairs and was recognized at the 2008 Awards luncheon at the Willard Hotel in Washington DC on June 19. AFFIRM (the Association for Federal Information Resource Management) is a non-profit, volunteer, educational organization whose goal is to improve the management of information within the Federal Government. AFFIRM is based in the Washington, DC area, and is an affiliated council of the American Council for Technology (ACT).

Center Associates Attend the GSA Above and Beyond Ceremony

The Small Business GWAC Center, represented by associates Jihyun Huyck, Business Development Specialist, Aletha Pelham and Lee Tittle, Contract Specialists, attended the GSA Above and Beyond Awards Ceremony in Washington, DC, on June 11. The Center received the Algeon B. Gaither Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Small Business Support Award for successfully creating and managing the Veterans Technology Services (VETS) GWAC.



From left to right: Ronald Langston, National Director, Dept of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency, Jovita Carranza, Acting Administrator, SBA, Mrs. Gaither, Small Business GWAC Associates - Jihyun Huyck, Aletha Pelham, and Lee Tittle, and David Bibb, Acting Administrator, GSA

Center's Carver Receives Northstar Award from GSA Heartland Region

Chris Carver, Program Analyst, received the GSA Heartland Region Northstar All-Star award certificate and pin presented by the Heartland's Regional Administrator Brad Scott. Chris was recognized for "using her knowledgeable, patient and pleasant nature to ensure that her internal and external customers receive the support that they need. This was most recently demonstrated during a transition to a new Management Information System for Small Business GWAC customer orders", and Chris's ability to handle many issues during that transition.

Center's Carver, Claypole and Hanavan Receive Master's Certificates in Project Management

Chris Carver, Program Analyst, Misty Claypole, Contracting Officer, and Lori Hanavan, Business Development Specialist, received their Master's Certificates in Project Management in May, 2008. The Master's Certificate in Project Management, offered by the George Washington University School of Business, is awarded to those who successfully attain the knowledge and experience to oversee all aspects of project management, including initiation, scheduling, quality, procurement and communications issues.

Small Business GWAC Sales

Total order value as of June 30, 2008:

★ **8(a) STARS** \$1,307,059,047

★ **VETS** \$124,601,223

For a listing of customer agencies visit www.gsa.gov/sbgwac and click "Small Business GWAC Sales".

Selling to the Federal Government 101



Sources Sought Notices – 12 Tips for Success

As an industry partner seeking federal opportunities, you probably have seen or responded to a Sources Sought notice in the FedBizOpps website. A Sources Sought notice is a way for federal agencies to survey the marketplace for companies or solutions that can meet their requirements or validate their proposed approach to a solution.

Furthermore, as a contract holder with the Small Business GWAC Center, you receive e-mail messages from us making you aware of potential business opportunities. This activity is performed as a courtesy and as a way to promote the small business GWACs but more importantly, it provides your company with opportunities to participate in federal procurements that you might not otherwise have known about.

In responding to Sources Sought notices, here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Read the notice carefully.
2. Be sure to clarify any items or language that is unclear prior to preparing your response.

3. Ask the requesting Contracting Officer and Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for information regarding the acquisition strategy. Many organizations post their small business office or representative's e-mail address on their website so this information is publicly available to you.
4. Know the customer and context of the potential acquisition. Let it inform your response.
5. Offer evidence of your company's technical approach when proposing the organization pursue a particular technical solution or direction.
6. Proofread your response for technical clarity, spelling and organization.
7. Inform them that you are a contract holder on GSA's 8(a) STARS, VETS and/or COMMITS NexGen GWACs.
8. Offer to meet with them to follow up.
9. If responding via e-mail, include the organization's small business specialist or office as a 'cc' addressee so they are aware of the Sources Sought notice and of your company's response.
10. Make sure your response is timely.
11. Be persuasive and persistent, but don't spam the designated point(s) of contact.
12. Inform the Small Business GWAC Center of questions, issues or concerns pertaining to contract language or policy.

Small Business GWAC Quiz

1. Which small business GWAC has been transferred to the GSA from the Dept of Commerce?
 - a. 8(a) STARS
 - b. Alliant Small Business
 - c. COMMITS Nex Gen
 - d. VETS
2. Where is the GWAC Management Information System (MIS) located?
 - a. ITSS Solutions Shop at <http://itss.gsa.gov>
 - b. ccr.gov
 - c. FedBizOpps.gov
 - d. GSA e-Library at gsaelibrary.gsa.gov

ANSWERS

1. c

2. d

"The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether we win or lose, we have applied the best of ourselves to the task at hand." — *Vince Lombardi*

Acquisition Corner

New Rule Allows Protests on Orders over \$10M

Historically, FAR 16.505 has precluded protest of any order except on the grounds that the order increased the scope, period of performance or maximum value of the contract. The 2008 National Defense Authorization Act has amended FAR 16.505 by adding a provision to allow protest of any order in excess of \$10M, effective 28 May 2008. The Act puts no limits on the reasons that could be used for filing a protest on any order over \$10M. Only those contractors that have received an award under a Multiple Award, Indefinite Delivery/Indefinite Quantity (MA/IDIQ) scenario have the right to protest.

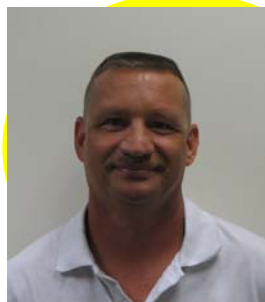
However, rather than abandoning GWACs for the even more treacherous waters of full and open competition, Ordering Contracting Officers should promote transparency by considering the following approaches to mitigate the chance of a protest:



1. Communicate early and often with contractors to insure understanding of the requirement and selection criteria (i.e., requests for information, pre-solicitation conferences, draft solicitations...)
2. Consider the use of modular contracting to reduce risk
3. Streamline/simplify your selection process – FAR 16.505
 - a. Keep submission requirements to a minimum
 - b. Limit the number of evaluation factors to those that are meaningful discriminators
 - c. List your evaluation criteria and their relative order of importance
 - d. Use Oral Presentations when applicable
4. Allow sufficient time for evaluation and award
5. Ensure that the evaluation is consistent with the terms of the solicitation
6. Offer comprehensive debriefings (face to face, if possible) that address material strengths and weaknesses in the proposal as related to the evaluation criteria

Ordering Contracting Officers who embrace these guidelines and follow sound contracting principles and practices should have no trouble navigating safely through these new waters.

- *Rebecca Eden*, Procurement Analyst, GSA Enterprise GWAC (West) Center



Todd Tekesky
Contracting Officer

Spotlight

Todd Tekesky joined the Small Business GWAC Center in May 2008 after two and a half years in GSA's Assisted Acquisition Services and 22 years in the Marine Corps. Todd is currently the Procuring Contracting Officer for the COMMITTS Next Generation GWAC. Married with three children, Todd and his family are avid soccer fans who can always be found at any Kansas City Wizards home game. When away from the office Todd focuses his time and attention coaching four competitive youth soccer teams ranging in age from 9 – 14 years old. In addition to coaching Todd spends the balance of his free time helping to run a Not For Profit soccer club in the Raymore, Mo area and is dedicated to furthering and assisting youth soccer and its players in the Raymore/Peculiar Missouri surrounding area.

Upcoming Events



The Small Business GWAC Center participates in a variety of events throughout the year. Many events offer training on GSA's GWACs as well as networking opportunities for small business. Please monitor our website for updates.

August 8	DISA Forecast to Industry	Arlington, VA
August 11-14	2008 GSA Network Services Conference	Dallas, TX
August 24-28	Air Force IT Conference & EXPO	Montgomery, AL
October 21-23	AFCEA InfoTech Conference & Expo	Dayton, OH
January 26-30	2009 Cyber Crime Conference	St. Louis, MO

Contact Us

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